

ABSOLUTE BATMAN



ALL IN

13+
TEEN

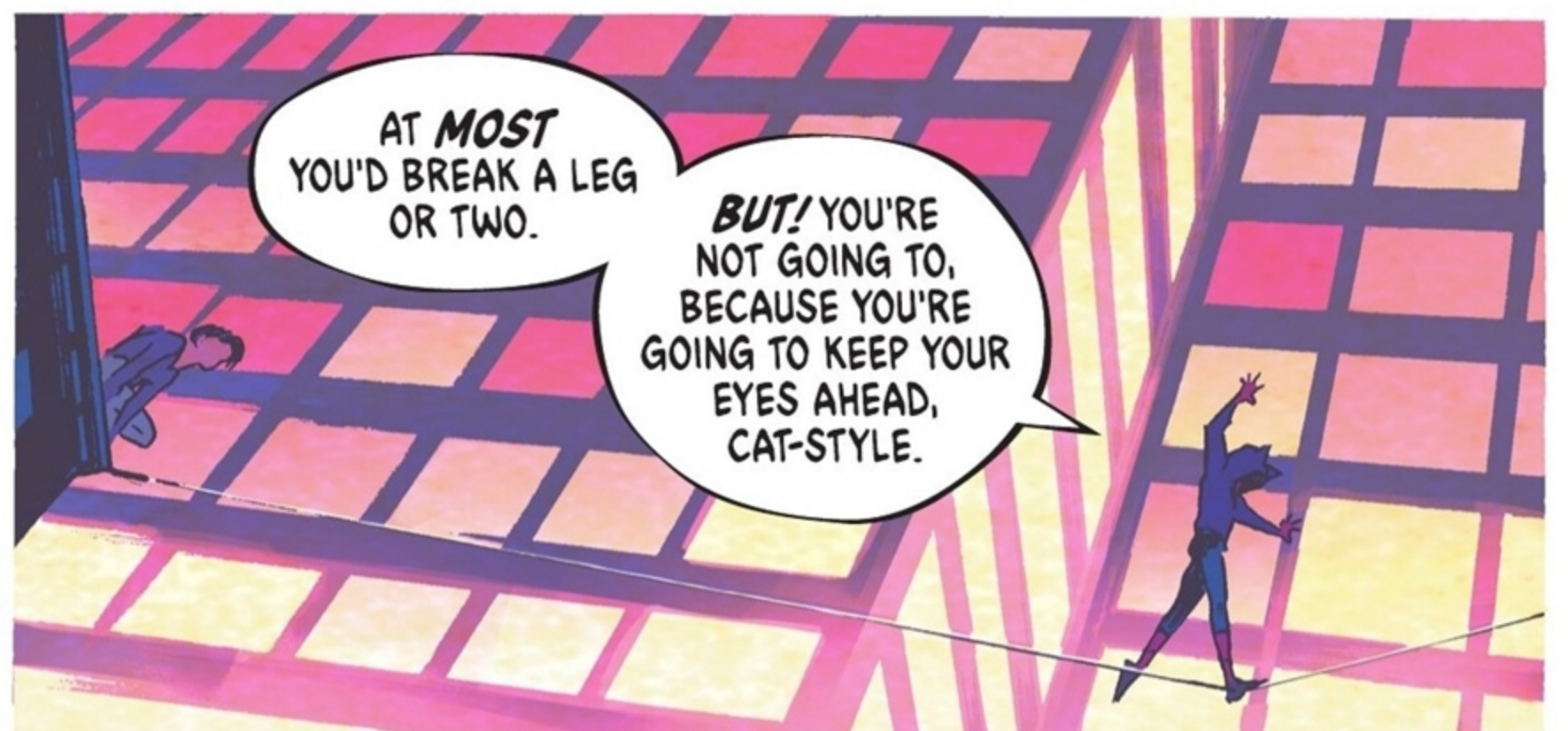
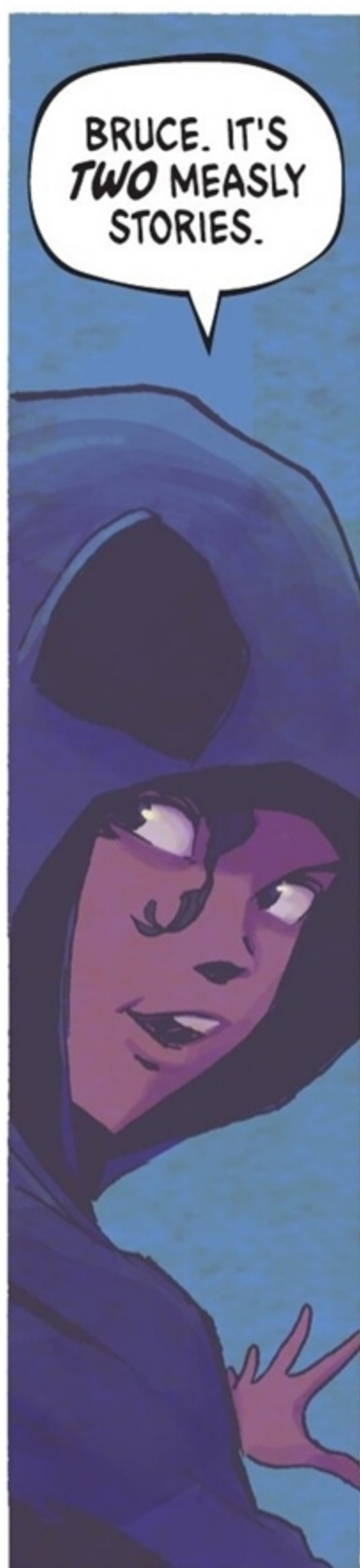
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SNYDER
DRAGOTTA
MARTIN

DRAGOTTA

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**ABSOLUTE
BATMAN**

"THE ZOO"

PART THREE

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EDITOR: KATIE KUBERT • EXECUTIVE EDITOR: CHRIS CONROY • BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER**



I've spent more than four decades cultivating a life of **stealth**.



WHAT THE...



I have over twenty passports, twice as many identities.

I pride myself on being **no one**. The vague shape of a man sitting across from you on the train. An outline, a charcoal sketch.

Forty years of creating a life in the shadows...

...all to find myself driving down Broadway on the hood of a giant, bat-themed dump truck. And it suddenly occurs to me...

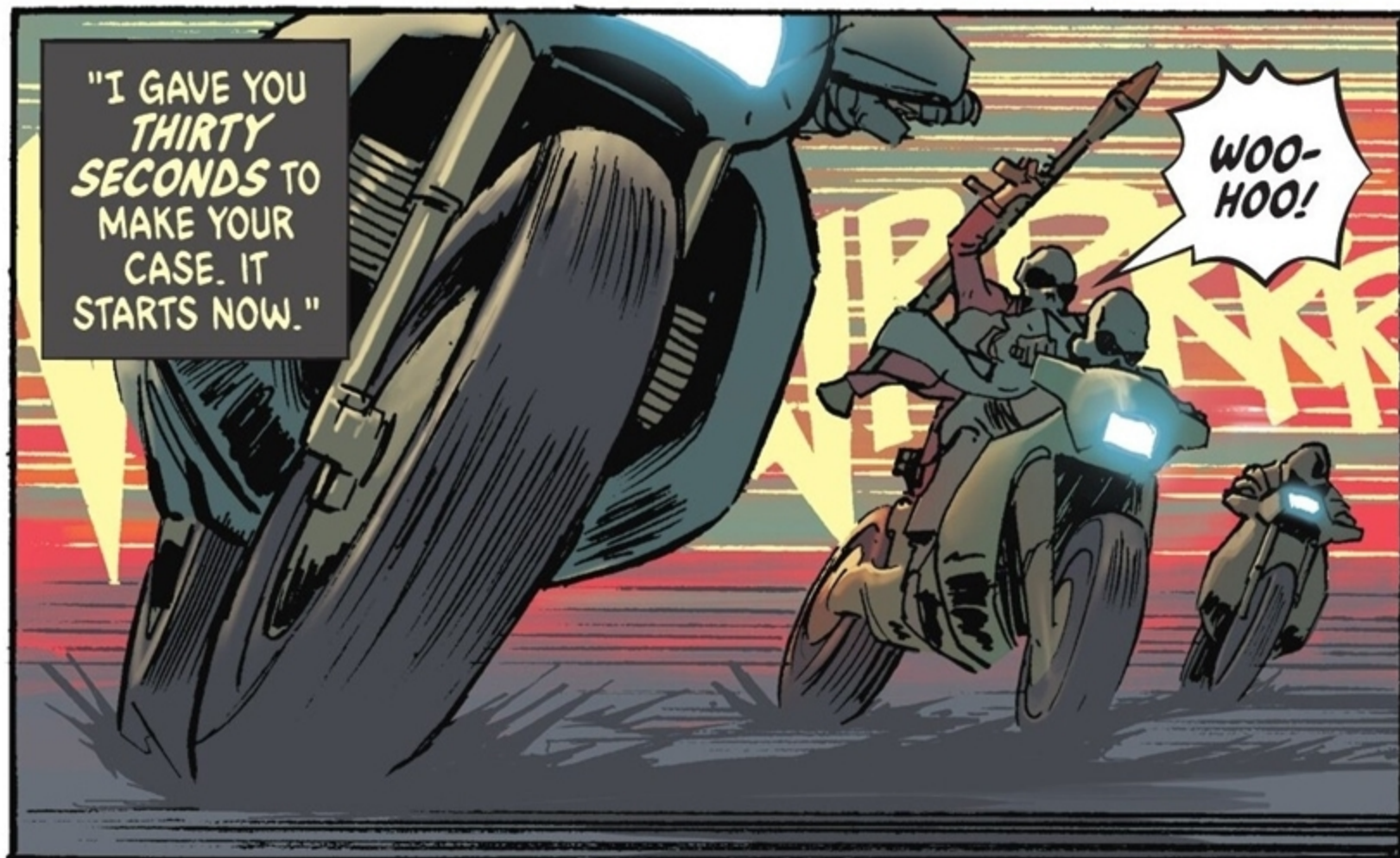


...I may actually hate Batman.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU **DOING?!** YOU CAN'T JUST **PLOW** STRAIGHT THROUGH THE CITY! THEY'LL OVERTAKE US IN NO TIME!



THEN YOU BETTER TALK FAST.



"I GAVE YOU **THIRTY SECONDS** TO MAKE YOUR CASE. IT STARTS NOW."

WOO-HOO!



IN MY FIELD, THERE ARE RUMORS OF A MAN CALLED THE **BLACK MASK!**

PING



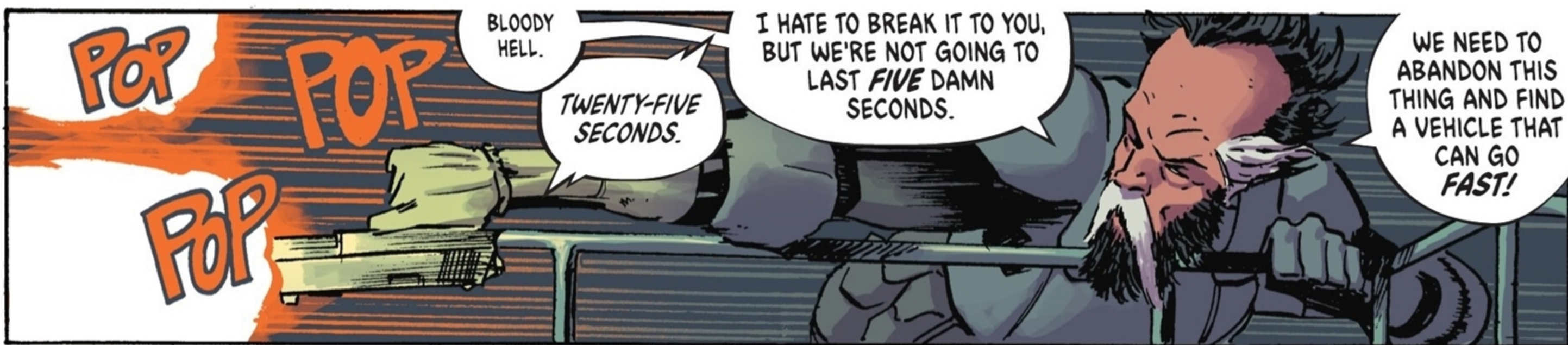
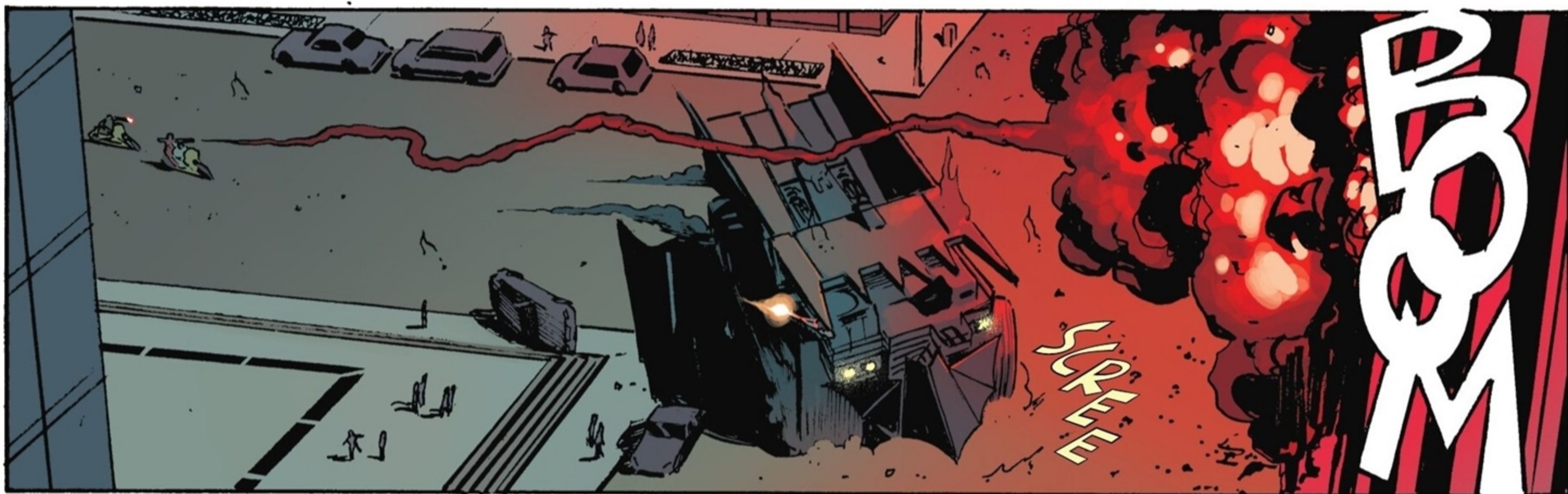
TORCH THEM!

TA TA TA
TA TA TA
TA TA TA



HE'S THE LEADER OF A SECRET PARAMILITARY GROUP THAT SERVES SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE ON THE PLANET. DESTABILIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, VIOLENT DISRUPTION...

...I BELIEVE THAT **ROMAN SIONIS**, THE LEADER OF THE PARTY ANIMALS, MAY BE THE BLACK MASK!



POP POP POP

BLOODY HELL.

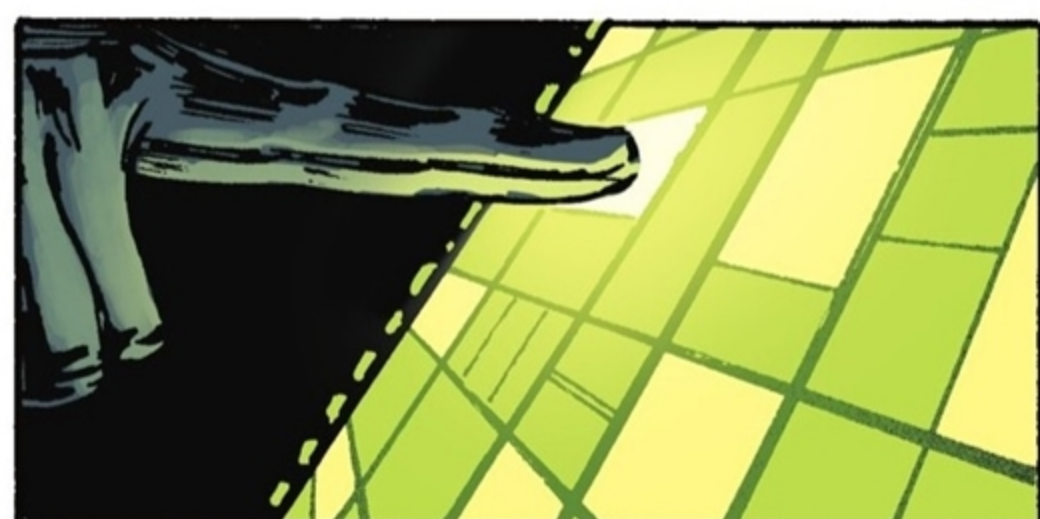
TWENTY-FIVE SECONDS.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO LAST **FIVE DAMN SECONDS**.

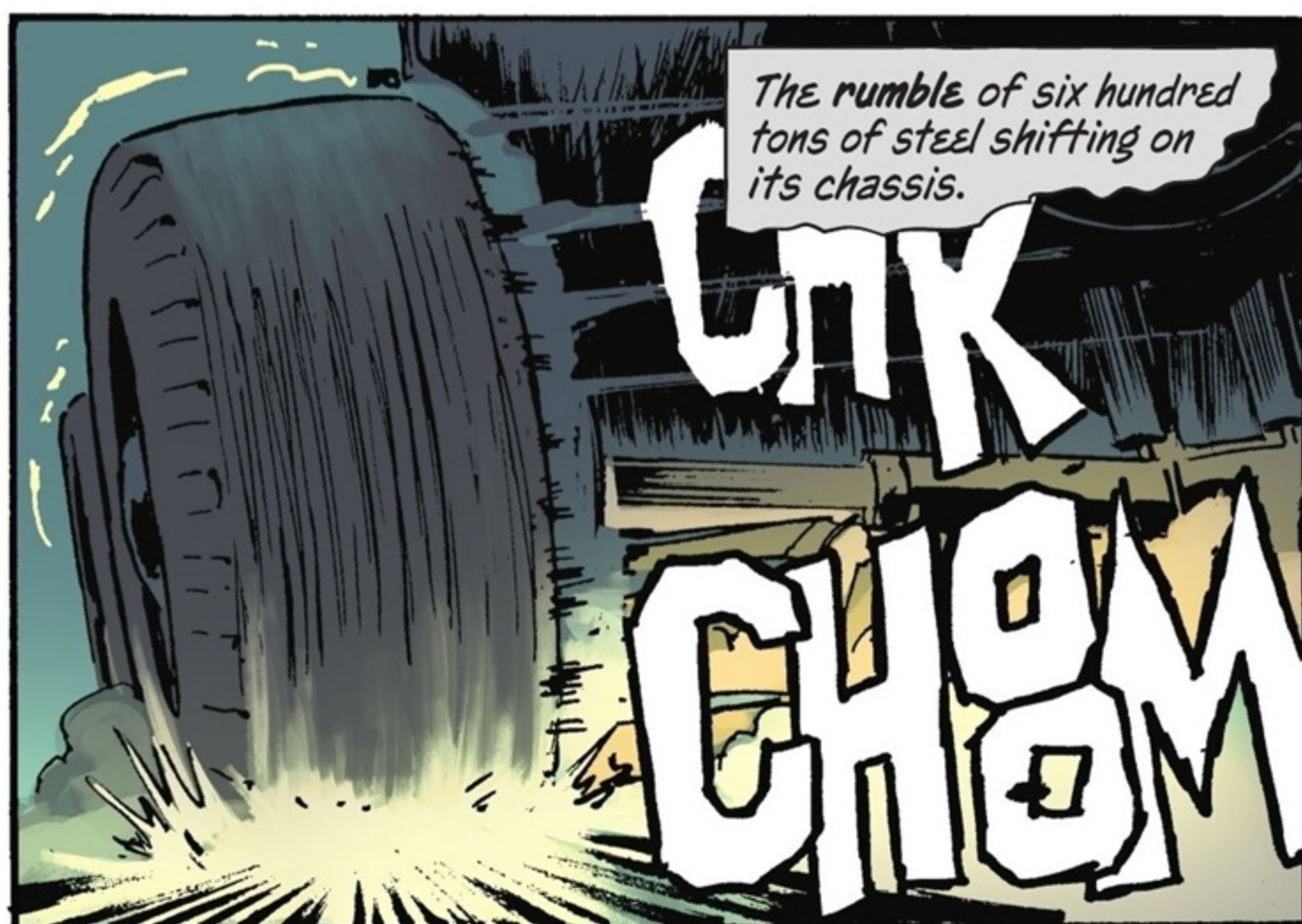
WE NEED TO ABANDON THIS THING AND FIND A VEHICLE THAT CAN GO **FAST!**



I'LL PRETEND YOU DIDN'T SAY THAT.



There's a sudden screech of hydraulics.

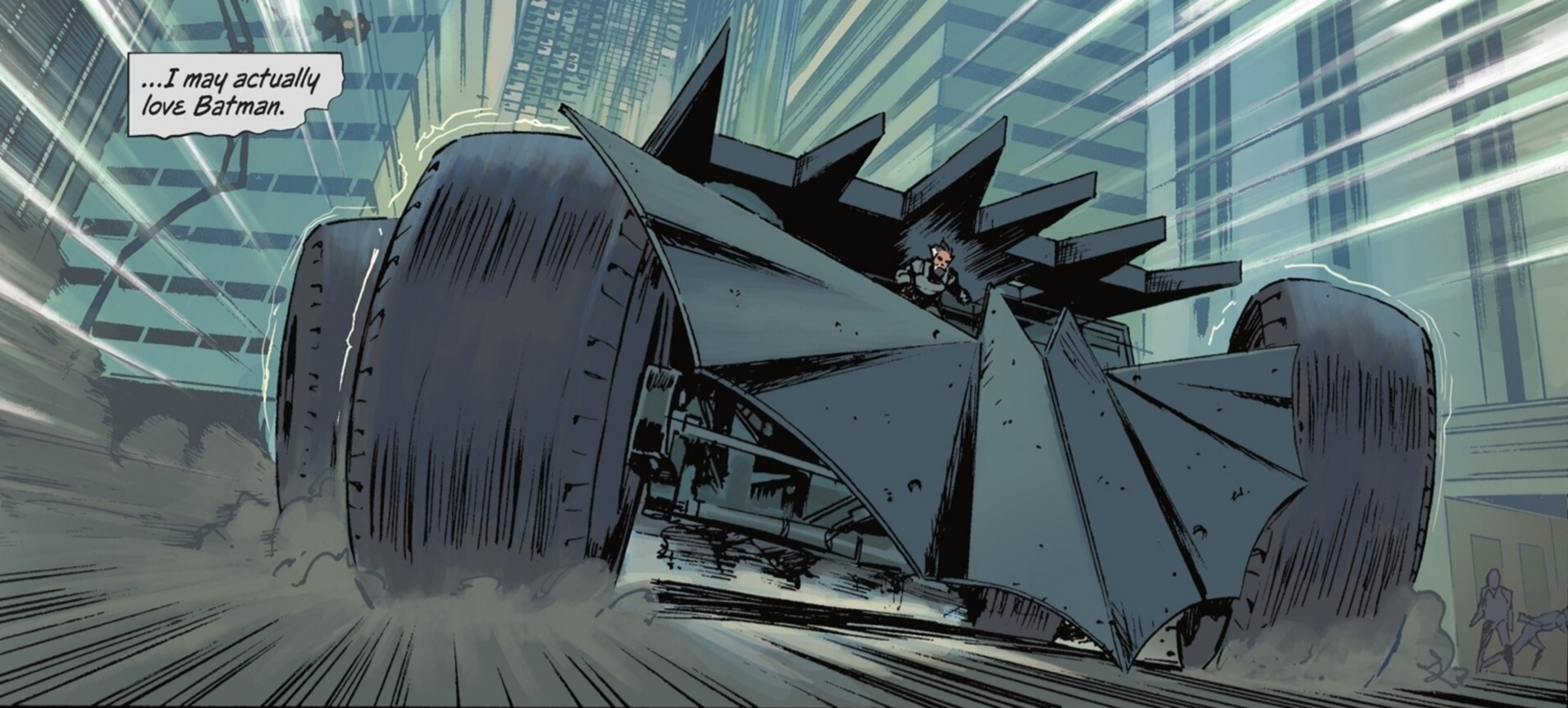


The rumble of six hundred tons of steel shifting on its chassis.

CTK
CHOM



The roof almost takes off my head, but all I can think is...



...I may actually love Batman.



YOU HAVE TWENTY SECONDS.

IF YOU MANAGE TO HOLD ON.



The sweet smell of kerosene burns my nose as we rocket forward. Homemade jet engines. Ever the builder, this one.

LISTEN TO ME, DAMMIT!

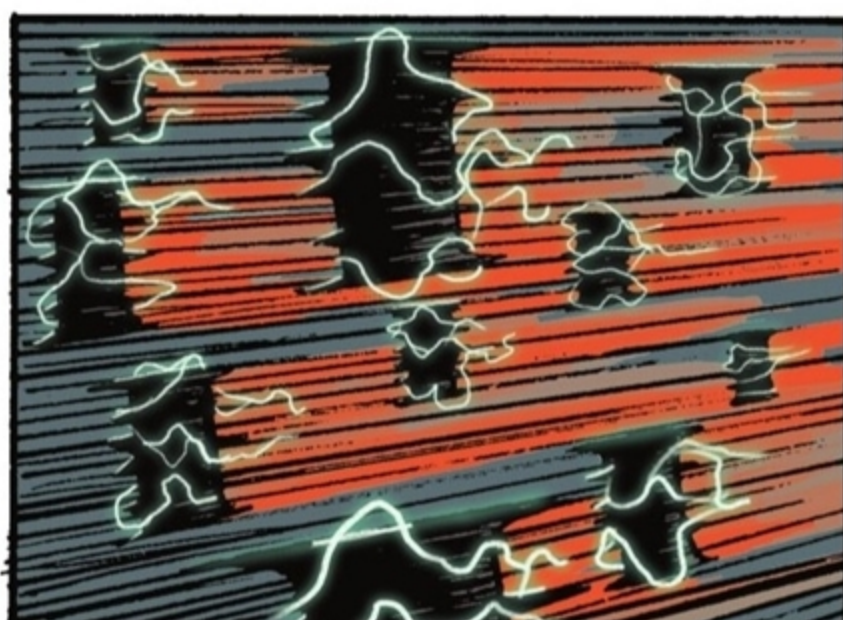


I CAN HELP YOU!



SO CLOSE THE HATCH AND PROVE IT.

FIFTEEN SECONDS.



BUT HE OFFERED YOU A *DEAL* BACK THERE. I *HEARD* HIM! THAT MEANS HE'S READY TO *COMPROMISE*.

MY GUESS IS, WHATEVER HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THESE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM, IT'S ALMOST DONE.

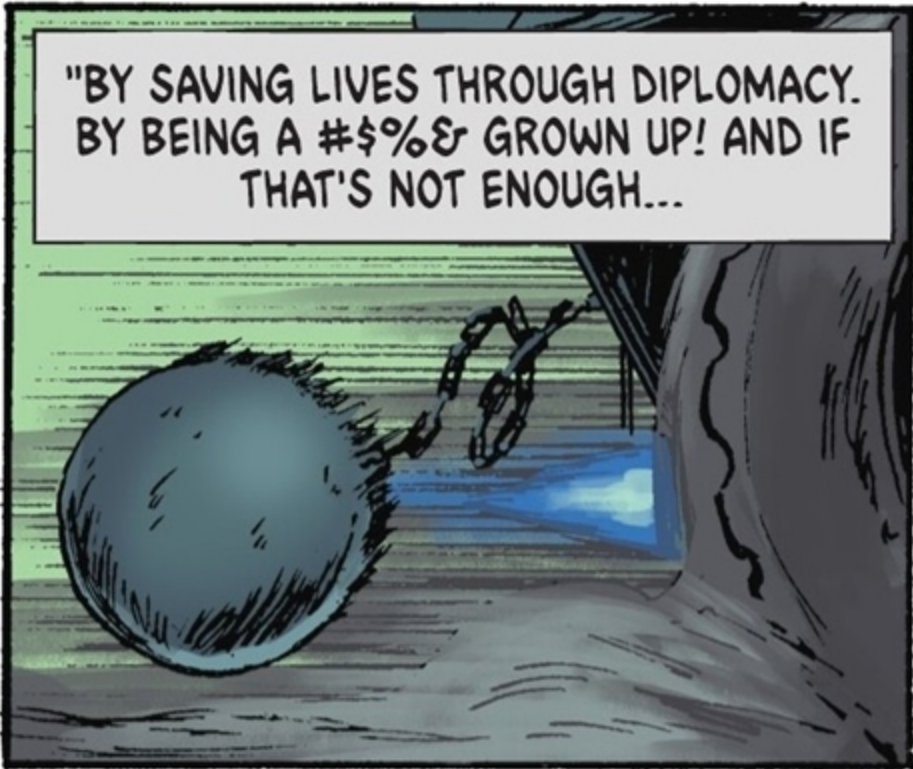
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?



I'M SAYING YOU *MEET HIM*, AGREE TO STEP DOWN YOUR FIGHT. I'LL BET HE'LL LOWER THE ATTACKS ON GOTHAM TO ALMOST NOTHING. MAYBE EVEN STOP THEM. YOU GET TO BE THE HERO.



BY QUITTING?
FORGET IT.



"BY SAVING LIVES THROUGH DIPLOMACY. BY BEING A #\$\$%& GROWN UP! AND IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH..."



"...BLACK MASK SERVES SOME OF THE RICHEST GLOBAL PLUTOCRATS. THIS OFFER, IT'S PROBABLY FOR A HUNDRED MILLION, MORE..."

"YOU TAKE IT, YOU CAN SET BATMAN UP AS SOMETHING *REAL* HERE.



"SOMETHING WITH *IMPACT*."



AND WHAT'S IN THIS FOR YOU?



"FOR SIONIS TO MAKE THE DEAL, HE'LL NEED TO MAKE TRANSACTIONS THAT WILL LIKELY GIVE MY PEOPLE ALL THEY NEED ON HIM.



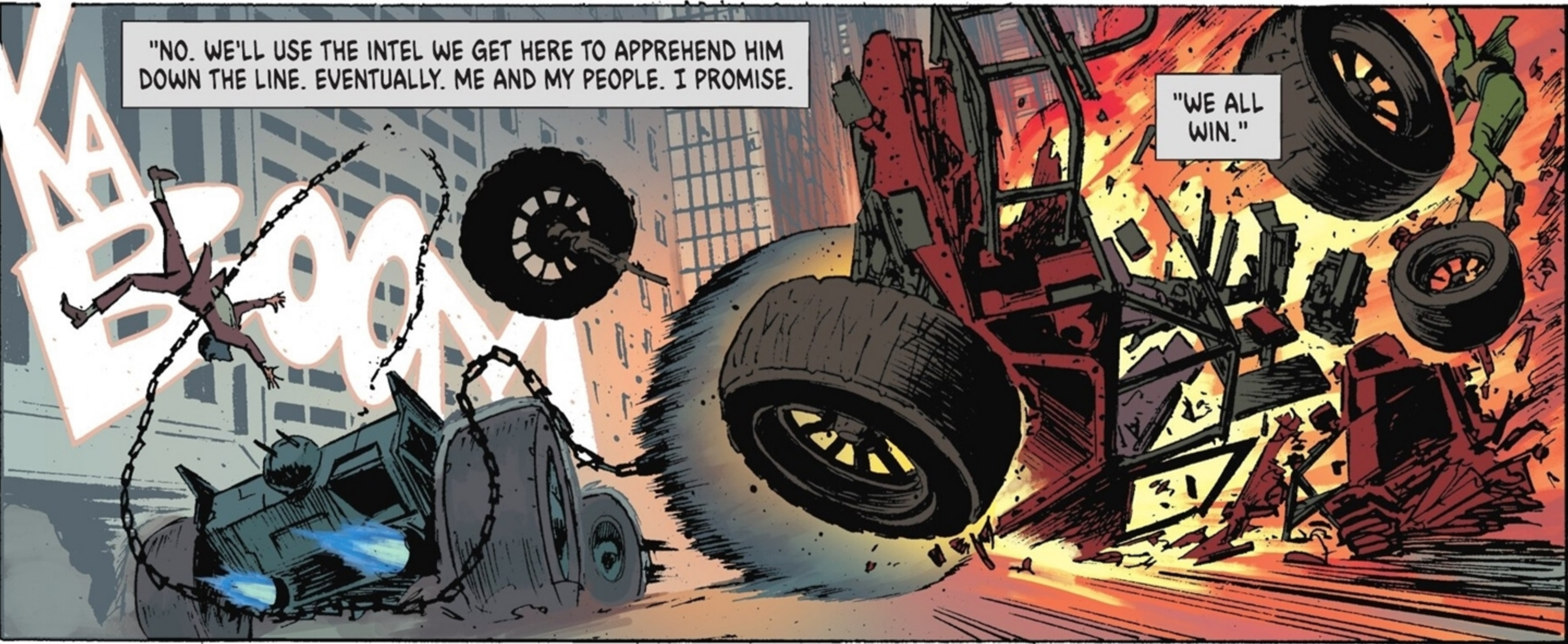
"SO *ME?* I GET TO LEAVE THIS CITY. AND *YOU* GET TO BUILD BATMAN BIG.



"*REALLY* BIG."



AND SIONIS JUST *GETS AWAY?*



"NO. WE'LL USE THE INTEL WE GET HERE TO APPREHEND HIM DOWN THE LINE. EVENTUALLY. ME AND MY PEOPLE. I PROMISE.

"WE ALL WIN."



Behind us, the sirens grow loud.

But I note that he has stopped his blasted countdown. He's hearing me, finally. He's listening, thank God.



THIS IS COMMISSIONER HARVEY BULLOCK! YOU WILL EXIT THE VEHICLE NOW!



YOU AND WHOEVER ELSE YOU GOT IN THERE! YOU HEAR ME?!



THERE'S NOWHERE LEFT TO GO. IT'S OVER!



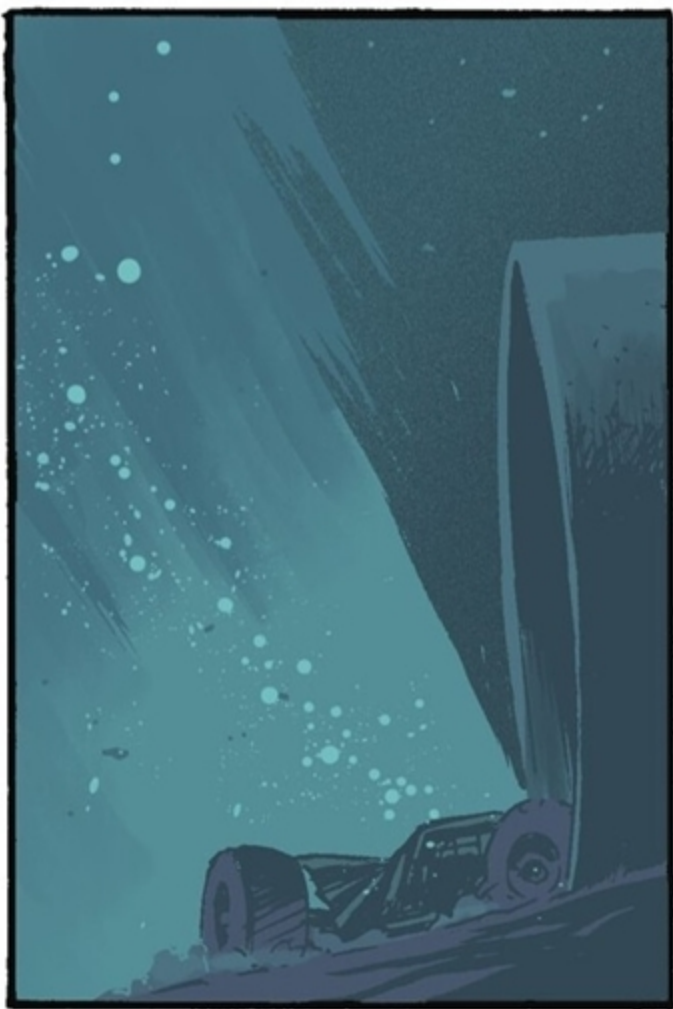
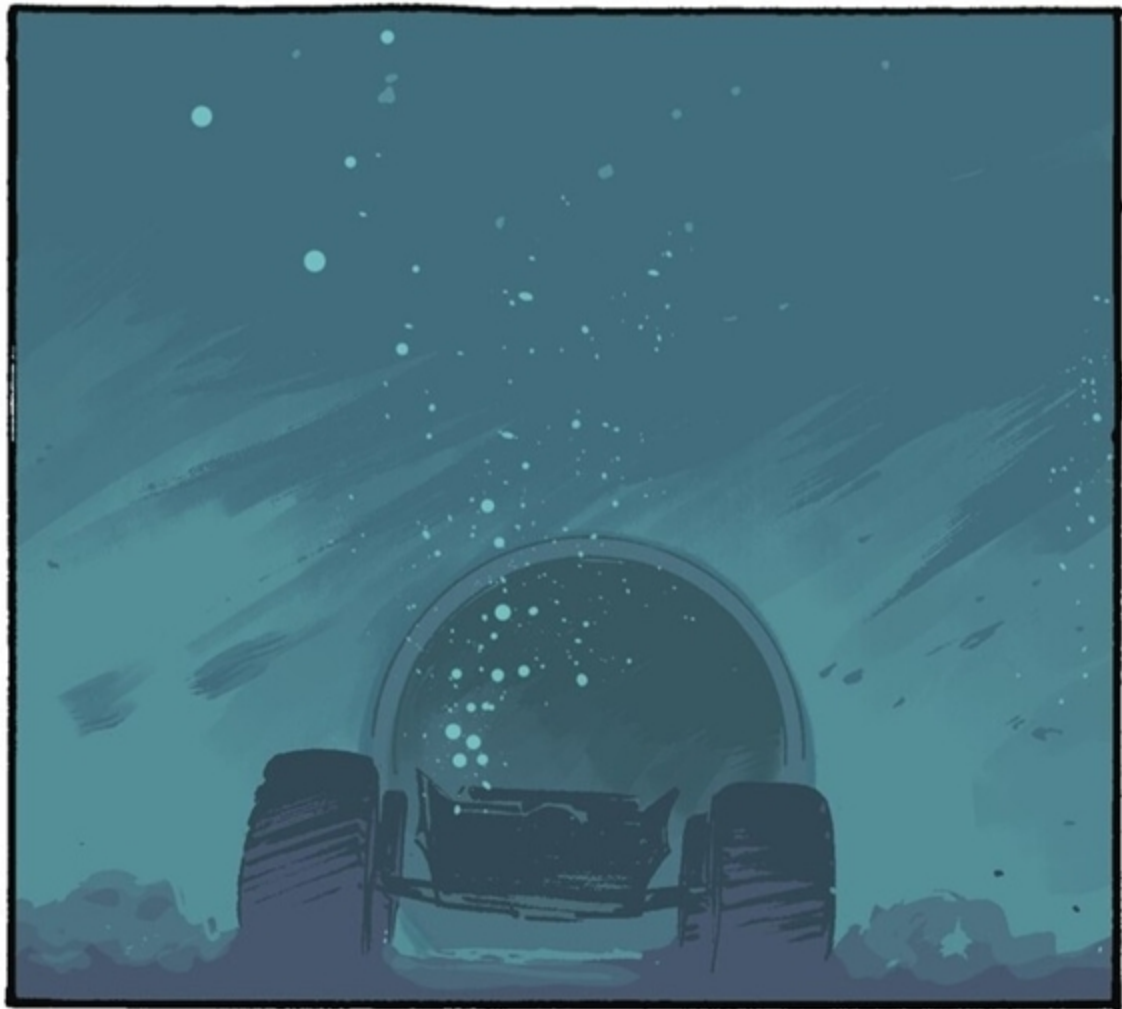
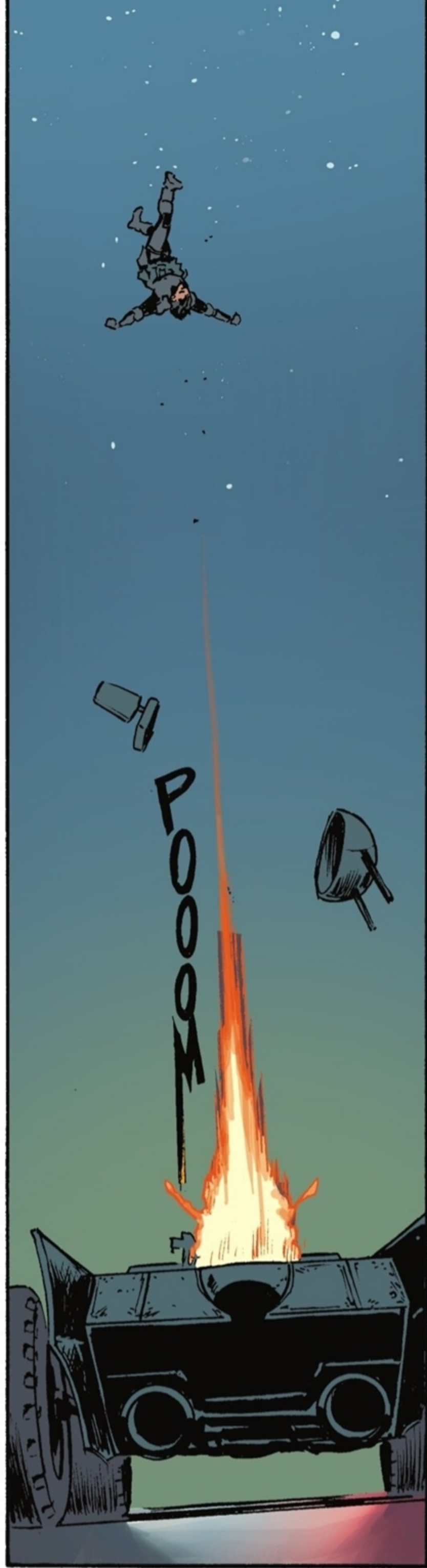
WE MAKE A DECENT TEAM, KID. TELL ME YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO GET US OUT OF THIS ONE AND LET'S KEEP IT GOING.



THE LEVER IN FRONT OF YOU.



ALL RIGHT TH--





...HOW IS IT?

NOT THERE ANYMORE.

WHY? WHAT HAPPENED?



DOESN'T MATTER.

SURE IT DOES.



✧SIGH✧ LOOK, SOME PEOPLE LIKE THE **IDEA** OF A FOSTER KID, BUT NOT THE REAL THING. THAT'S IN A GOOD CASE. THIS... WAS A BAD CASE.



MAN, WHAT IS THAT, THREE HOMES IN THE LAST YEAR?

FOUR. BUT WHO'S COUNTING?

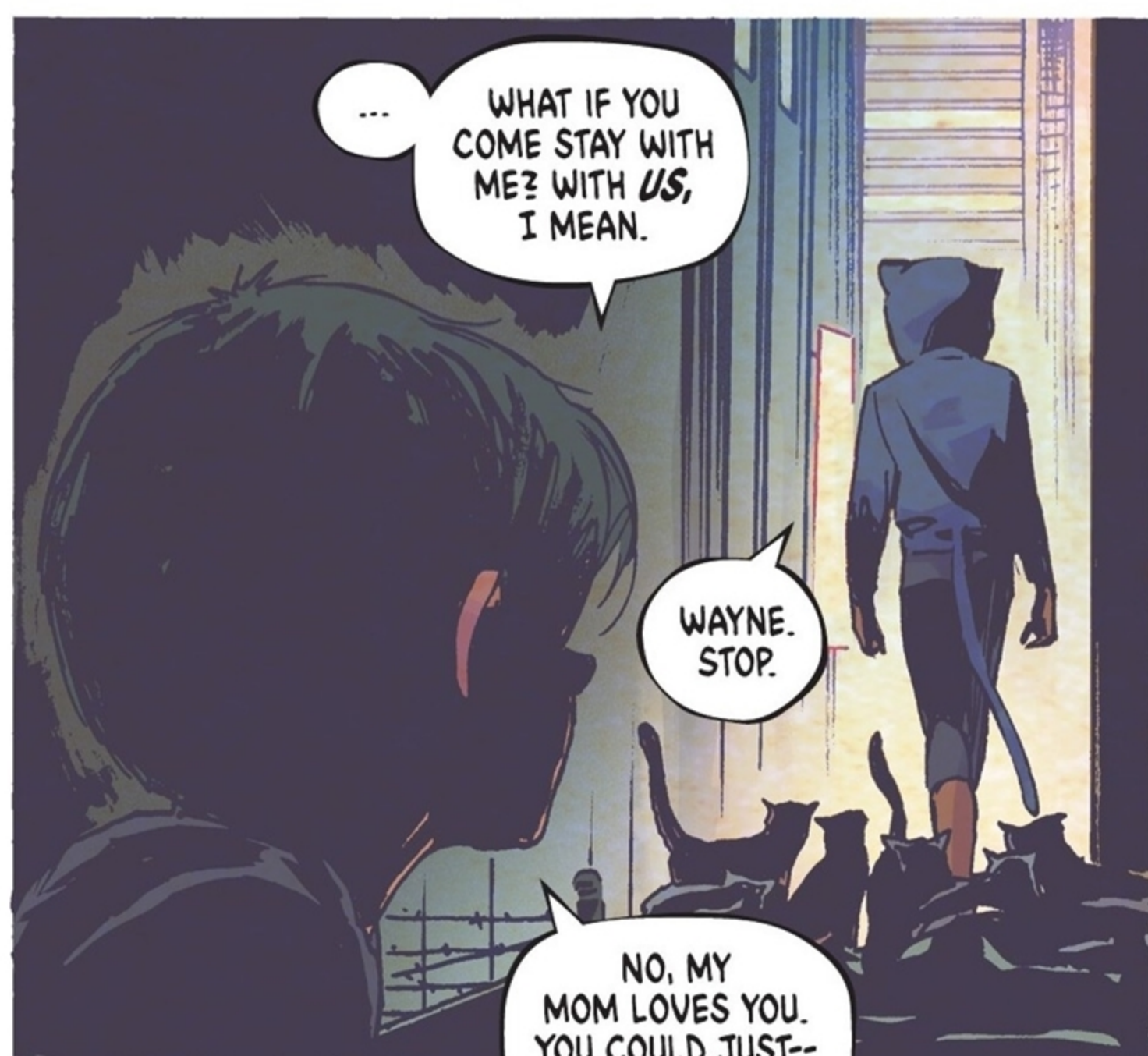


WELL, WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



I'M HERE, WITH YOU.

AND THEM. SEE, THAT'S THE THING, WAYNE. WHATEVER'S HAPPENING, I COME UP HERE AND **THESE GUYS**...THEY ALWAYS SHOW UP. PURRING, TOO.



... WHAT IF YOU COME STAY WITH ME? WITH **US**, I MEAN.

WAYNE. STOP.

NO, MY MOM LOVES YOU. YOU COULD JUST--



NO. I SAID NO, OKAY?

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING... HAPPY.





...ASK
AWAY,
BRUCE!

I CAME TO
TALK TO *YOU*,
MAN.



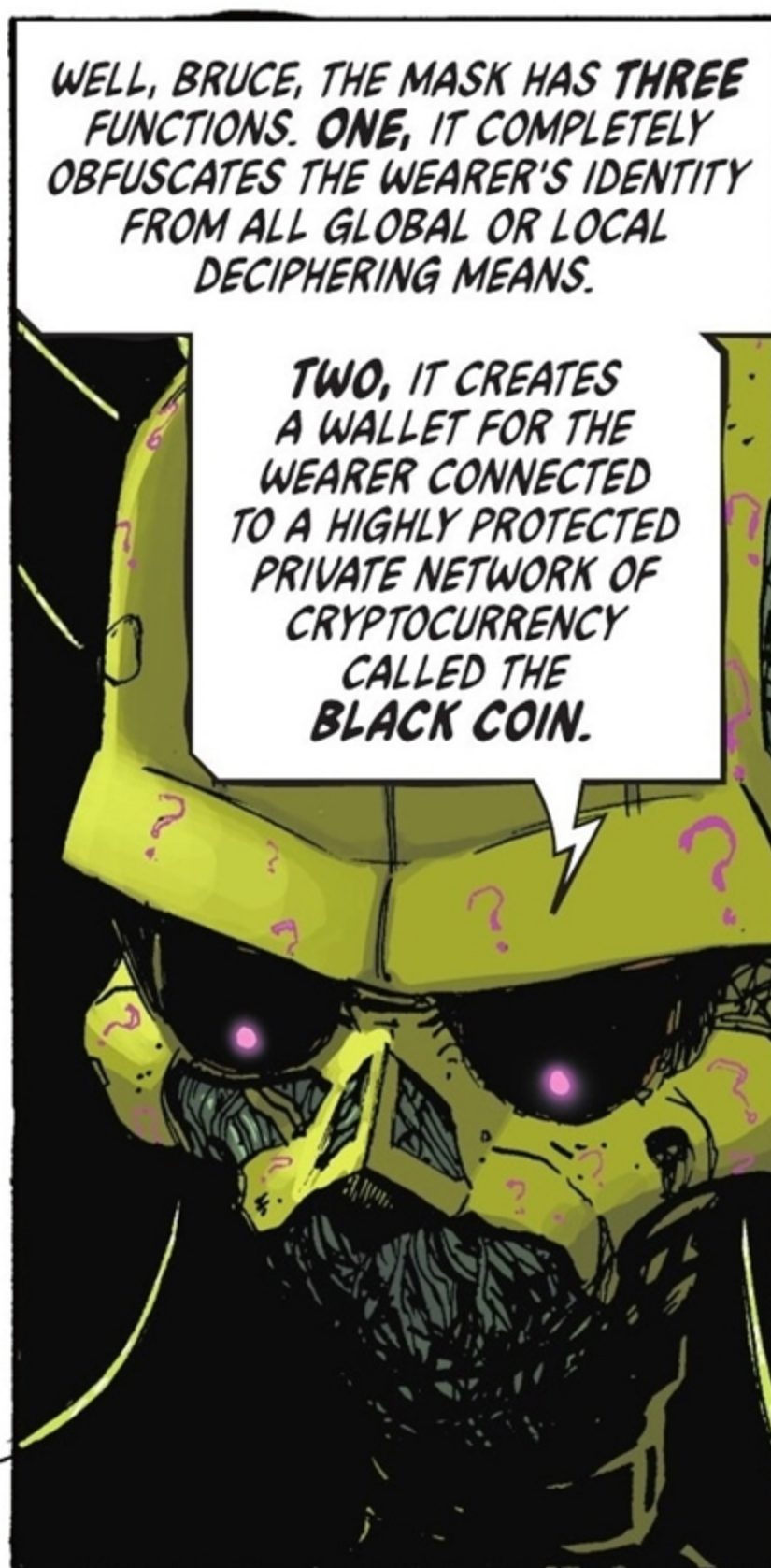
AH, BUT
HE *IS* ME. AND
YOU. AND EVERYONE.
HE CONTAINS ABOUT
FOUR-FIFTHS OF ALL
HUMAN KNOWLEDGE
AND COUNTING...
SO GO ON!

DOES
HE HAVE A
NAME?

I WAS THINKING
"AL," AFTER ALAN TURING,
THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA, AND
AS A VISUAL PLAY ON A.I., OF COURSE.
BUT NOW I'M JUST THINKING
SOMETHING WITH RIDDLES?
RIDDLE-MAN? BECAUSE THE
GREAT RIDDLE OF HUMANITY IS
HOW TO LIVE FOREVER, AM
I RIGHT? AND WE ALL EXIST
INSIDE THIS DUDE. BUT
I DIGRESS. GO,
GO, GO.



»SIGH» YO, AL.
HOW DO THE PARTY ANIMALS'
APE SKULLS WORK?



WELL, BRUCE, THE MASK HAS **THREE**
FUNCTIONS. **ONE**, IT COMPLETELY
OBFUSCATES THE WEARER'S IDENTITY
FROM ALL GLOBAL OR LOCAL
DECIPHERING MEANS.

TWO, IT CREATES
A WALLET FOR THE
WEARER CONNECTED
TO A HIGHLY PROTECTED
PRIVATE NETWORK OF
CRYPTOCURRENCY
CALLED THE
BLACK COIN.



AND **THREE**, AS YOU
KNOW, IT PROVIDES
OBJECTIVES AND
TARGETS FOR THE
WEARER, WITH
DIFFERENT
VALUATIONS.

"VALUATIONS"?



ARSON, ROBBERY,
MURDER...EACH HAS A
DIFFERENT VALUE IN BLACK
COIN. BUT WE'RE TALKING
TENS AND HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS. MEMBERS
CAN GET QUITE WEALTHY
QUITE FAST.

HOW WOULD
SOMEONE DISRUPT IT?
THIS NETWORK.



THE
NETWORK IS FAR
TOO EXPANSIVE
FOR ANYONE TO
BRING DOWN.



YOU COULD TAKE OUT A
LOCAL SERVER, BUT THE
NETWORK IS SATELLITE
BASED. THERE ARE
DEPOSITS OF THESE
MASKS ALL OVER
THE WORLD.



HUNDREDS.
MAYBE THOUSANDS
OF MEMBERS.

THERE
HAS TO BE SOME
WAY.

THERE
IS NOT.

BUT SEE,
YOU DON'T
ACTUALLY KNOW
EVERYTHING,
AL. EDDIE?



JUST DESTROY
THE MASK AND
FORGET IT.

COME
ON--

HE DOESN'T
WANT TO HELP
YOU, BRUCE,
EVEN IF HE
COULD.



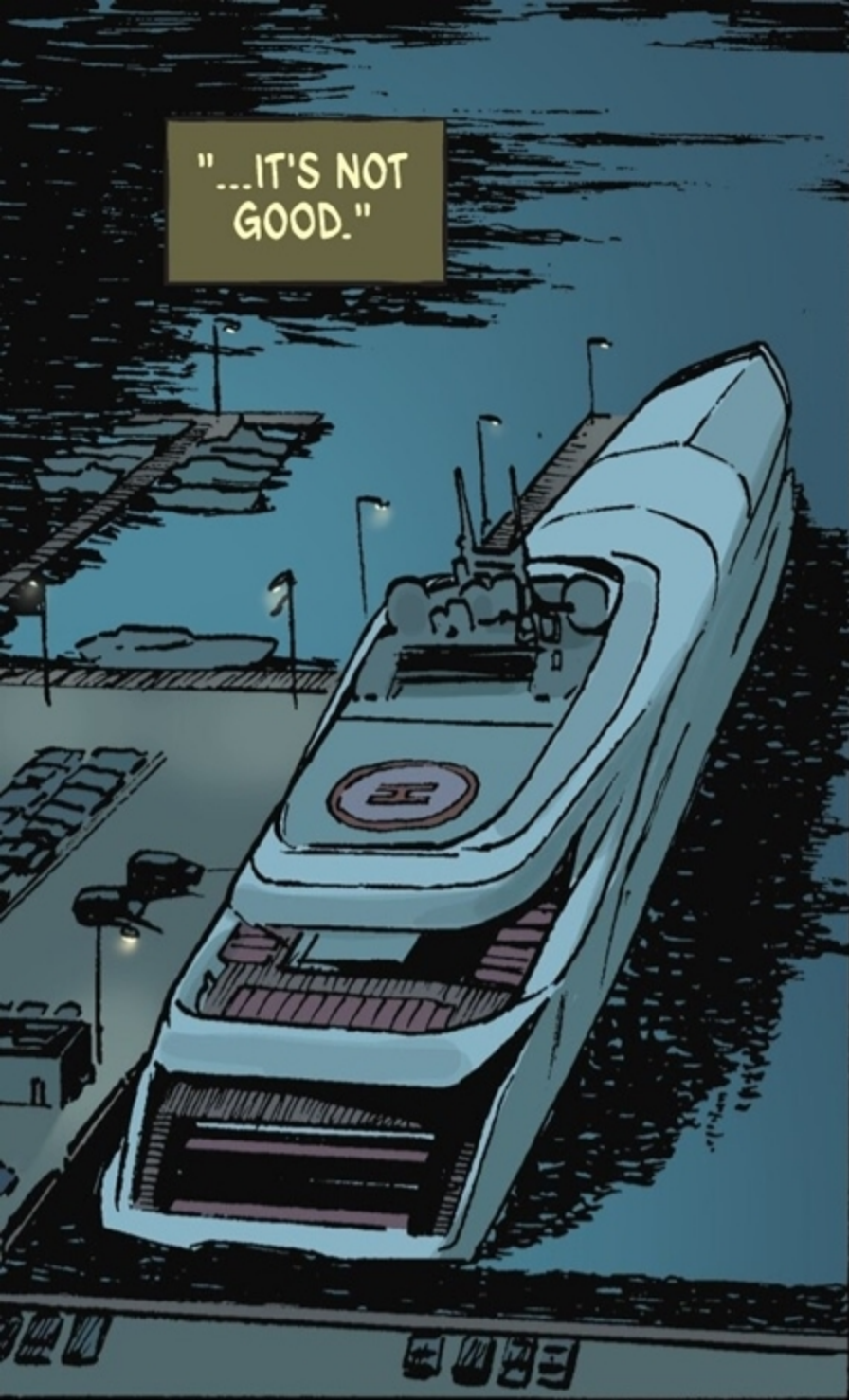
I MAY NOT KNOW
EVERYTHING, BUT
I KNOW THAT
MUCH.

WHY, I'M JUST
ASKING QUESTIONS.



YOU KNOW
WHAT THE **OLDEST**
KNOWN RIDDLE IS, BRUCE?





"...IT'S NOT GOOD."



WELCOME, WELCOME!

I APPRECIATE YOU AGREEING TO MEET ME.



YOU'RE NOT GETTING MY **ENDORSEMENT**, HILL. IF THAT'S WHY YOU INVITED ME HERE, YOU CAN FORGET IT. JIM AND I--

WHOA, WHOA! SLOW DOWN, COMMISSIONER. I'M NOT TRYING TO STEAL YOU AWAY FROM OLD JIMMY. I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO...



...AND TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF MINE.

DR. BENJAMIN, PERMISSION TO COME ABOARD? IS HE AVAILABLE?



HE'S IN THE BODY ROOM.

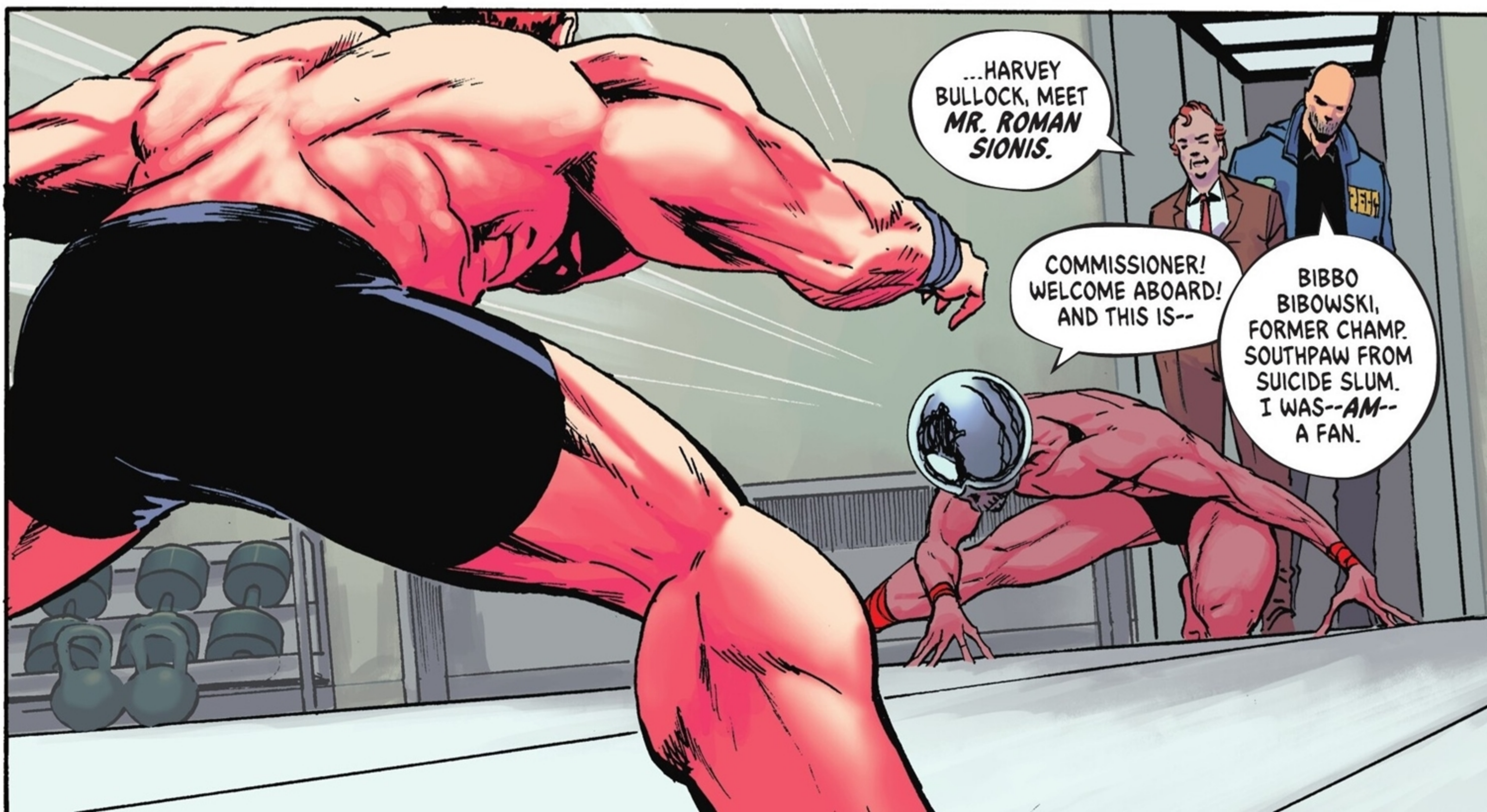


WOW. COOL SHADES.



HILL, I CAME BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU COULD HELP US.

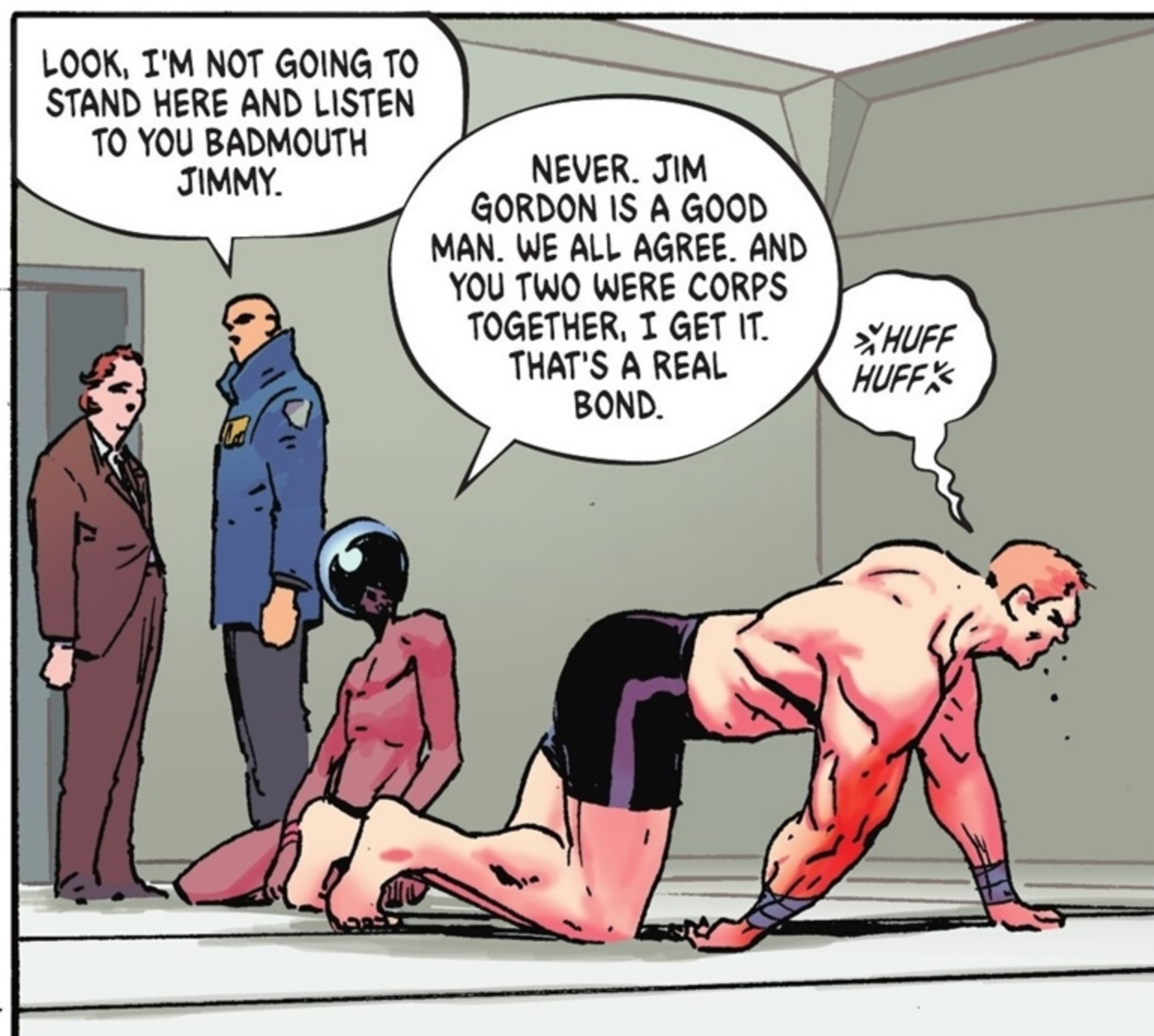
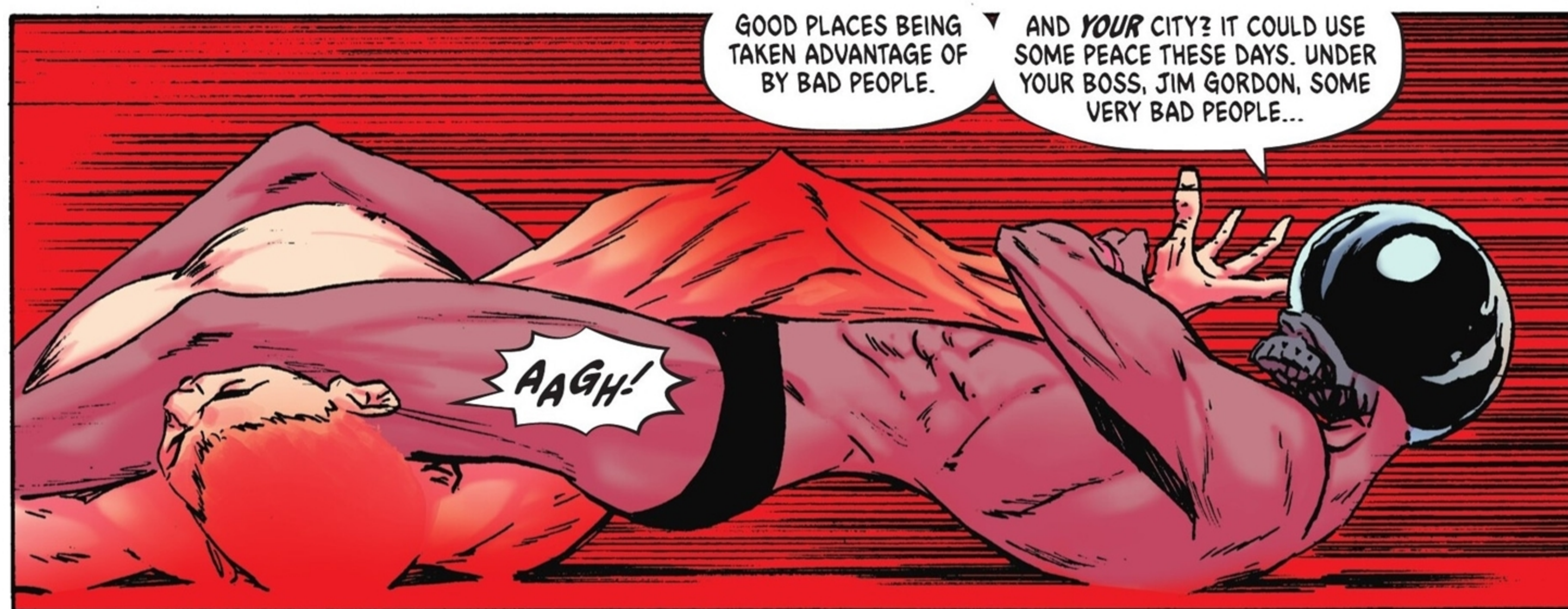
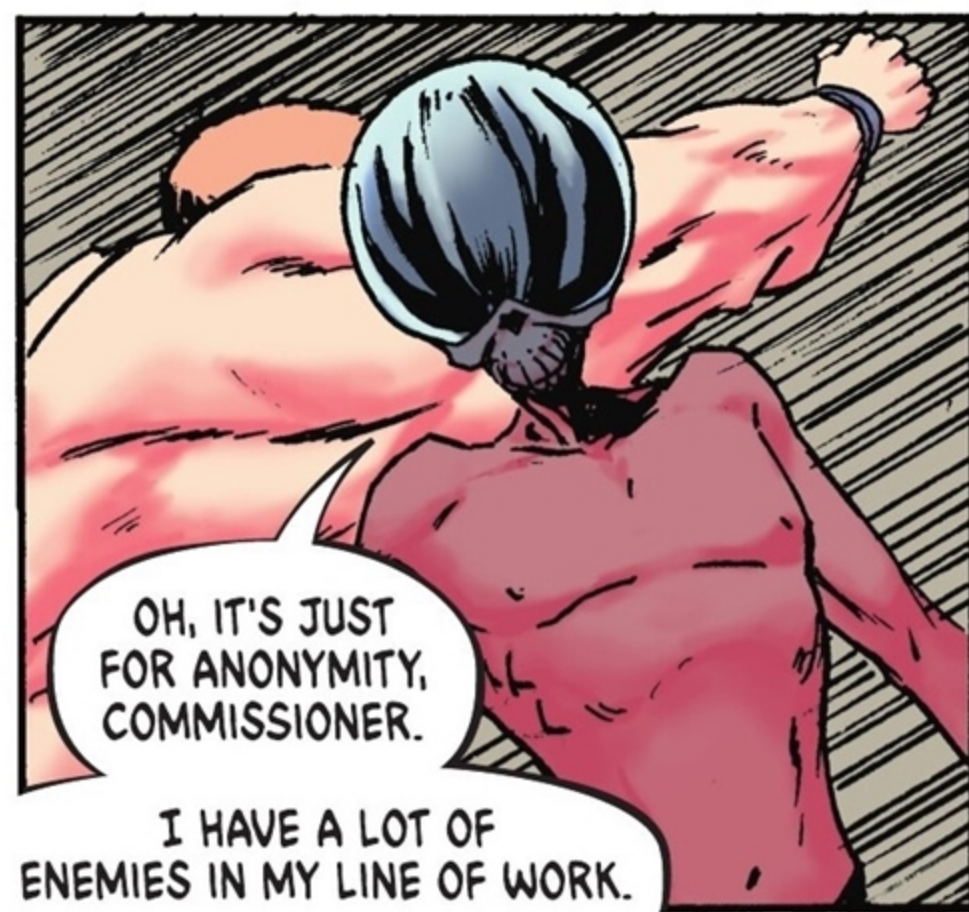
I CAN. THROUGH HIM...



...HARVEY BULLOCK, MEET **MR. ROMAN SIONIS**.

COMMISSIONER! WELCOME ABOARD! AND THIS IS--

BIBBO BIBOWSKI, FORMER CHAMP. SOUTHPAW FROM SUICIDE SLUM. I WAS--AM--A FAN.





BUT THE FACT IS, THE
PARTY ANIMALS ARE
#&%& DEGENERATES.
YOUNG, GODLESS,
BELIEVING IN NOTHING.



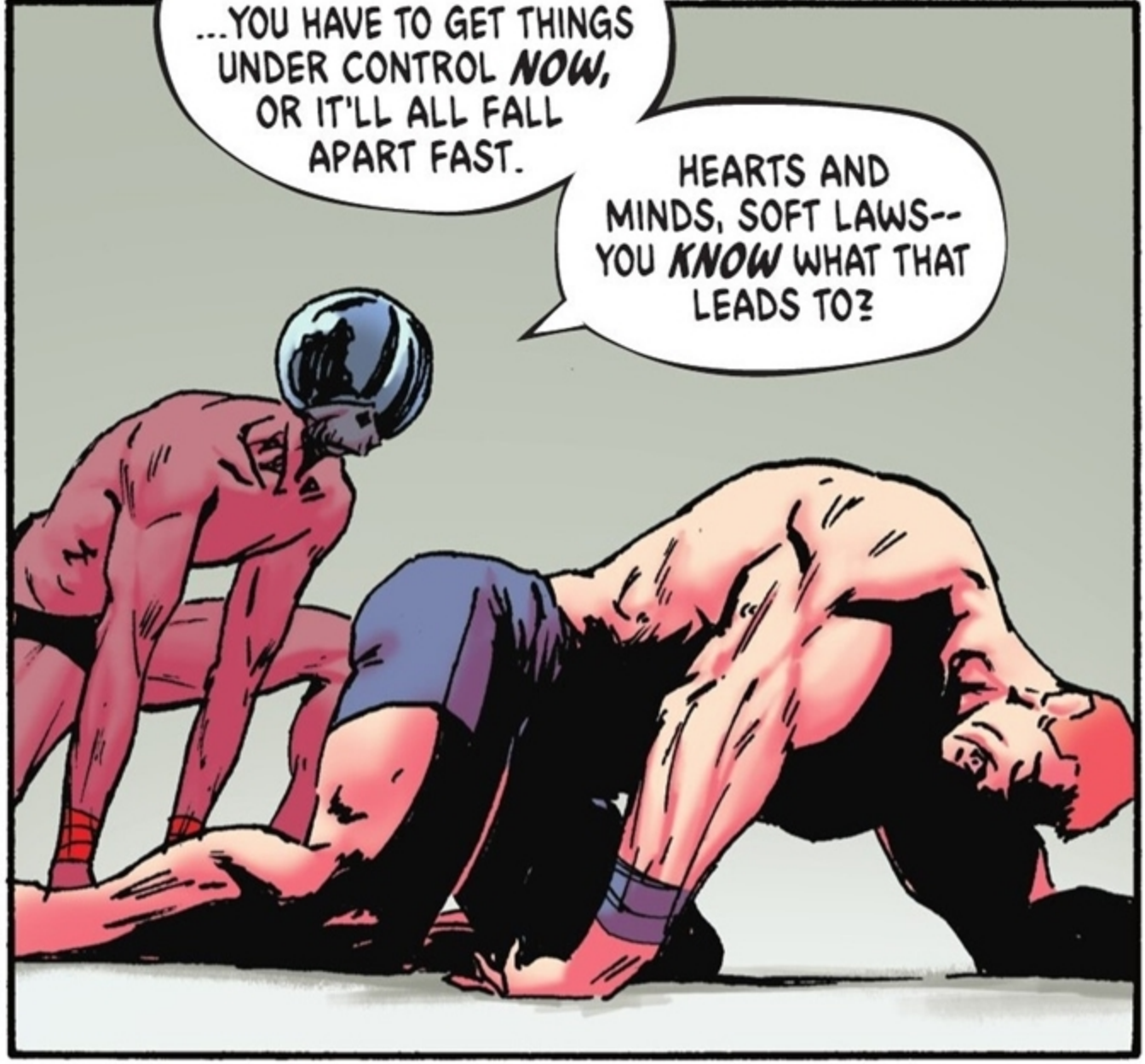
THEY'RE
FILTH.



NO
ARGUMENT
HERE.



AND THEY'RE
GROWING IN
NUMBER. BETWEEN
THEM AND THIS
BATMAN...



...YOU HAVE TO GET THINGS
UNDER CONTROL **NOW**,
OR IT'LL ALL FALL
APART FAST.

HEARTS AND
MINDS, SOFT LAWS--
YOU **KNOW** WHAT THAT
LEADS TO?



WAR.

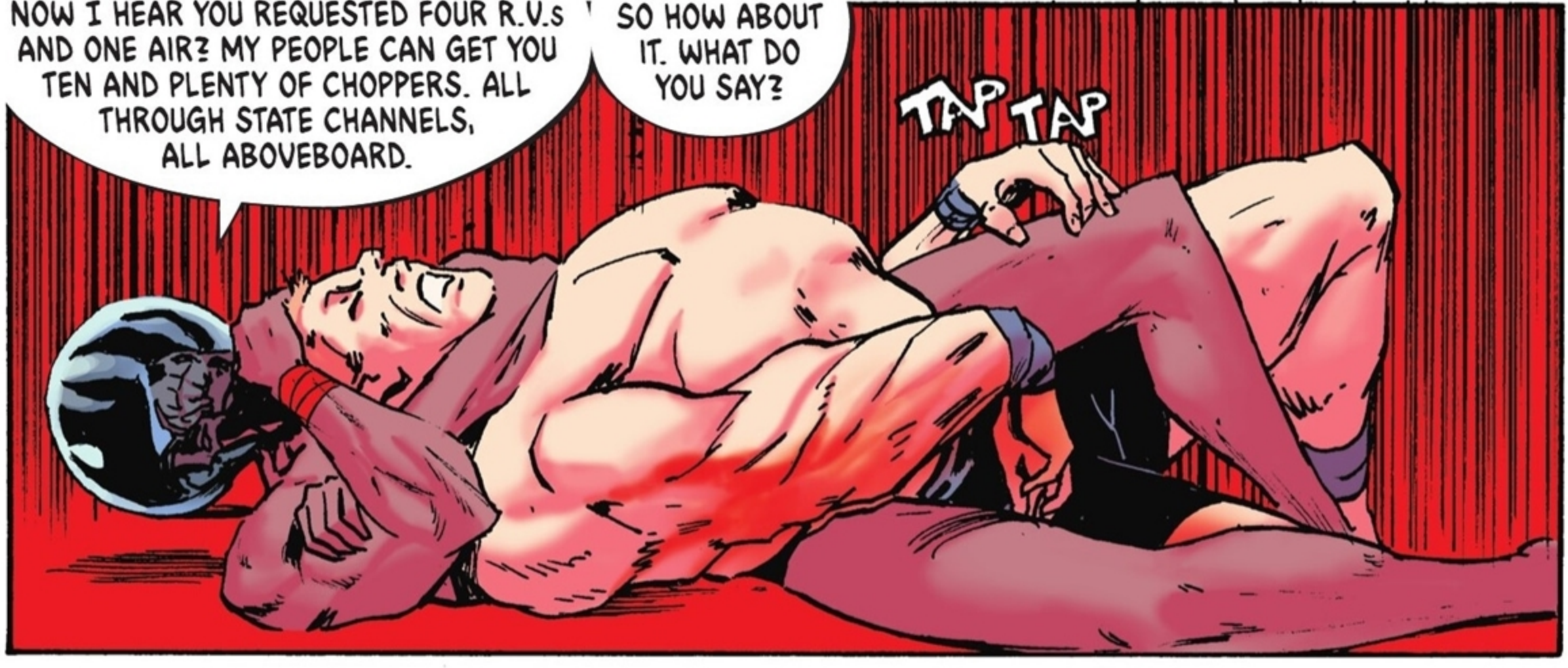


BINGO. I'VE SEEN IT
HAPPEN IN CITIES ALL
OVER THE WORLD.
HELL, I GREW UP
IN ONE.

GAK!

NOW I HEAR YOU REQUESTED FOUR R.V.s
AND ONE AIR? MY PEOPLE CAN GET YOU
TEN AND PLENTY OF CHOPPERS. ALL
THROUGH STATE CHANNELS,
ALL ABOVEBOARD.

SO HOW ABOUT
IT. WHAT DO
YOU SAY?



TAP TAP



TAP



TAP



ALL
RIGHT,
MAN! HE'S HAD
ENOUGH!
@#%&!



IS HE...



NO! DON'T
WORRY ABOUT HIM,
COMMISSIONER.
HE'LL BE FINE.

NOW,
COME. LET'S
TALK ABOUT
PEACE.

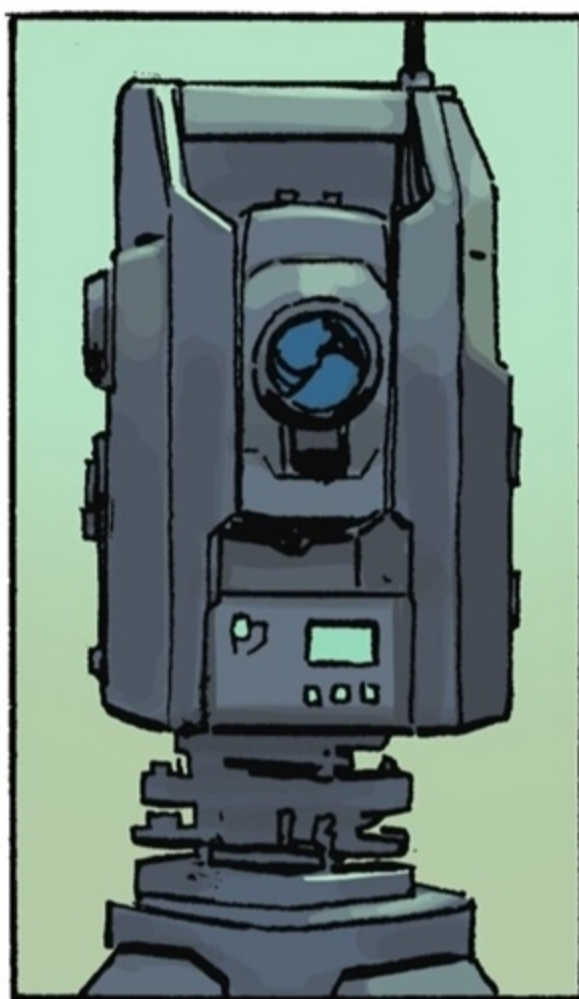
Your eyes open yet, Bruce?
You starting to see
the pieces?

They call them "Arks,"
these black sites.



Secret, unregulated
prisons run in conjunction
with other governments
around the world.

Ark A was the first, the prototype
in Santa Prisca. Ark B is in Russia.
Ark C is China.



Wherever you are, I hope it's
finally coming into focus.



Ark M, the biggest yet,
is planned for Gotham.

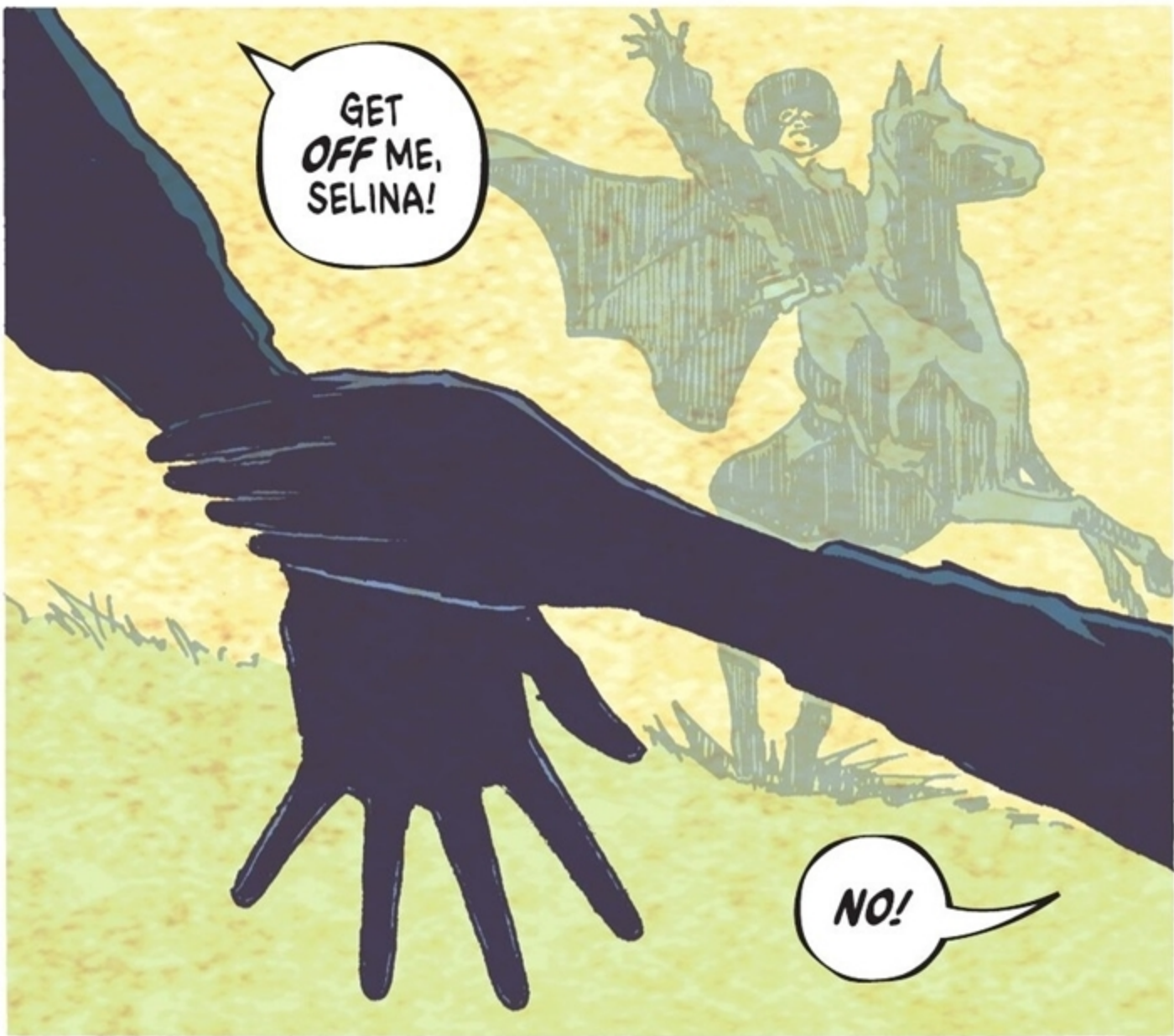
Look at it,
Bruce.



Look at what
you're up
against.

And all you
could lose...





GET OFF ME, SELINA!

NO!

THAT DAY. YOU REMEMBER THE **JOKE** YOU MADE TO YOUR DAD, ABOUT THE LION? HOW THE LION HAD IT MADE AT THE ZOO?



SO WHAT?

AND YOUR FATHER, HE SAID MAYBE THE LION WAS SAFE AND COZY, BUT IT DIDN'T **MEAN** ANYTHING?

WELL, THIS IS YOUR **CHANCE** TO MEAN SOMETHING, BRUCE. YOU'VE GOT TALENTS OTHER KIDS DON'T HAVE. AND YES, IT'S SCARY AND DANGEROUS AND NEW, BUT YOU NEED TO BLOCK THAT OUT AND GO RIGHT AT IT. CAT EYES...



I'M LEAVING.



THE HELL YOU ARE!

POPCORN ATTACK!

COME ON, BRUCE!



SIT YOUR ASS DOWN.

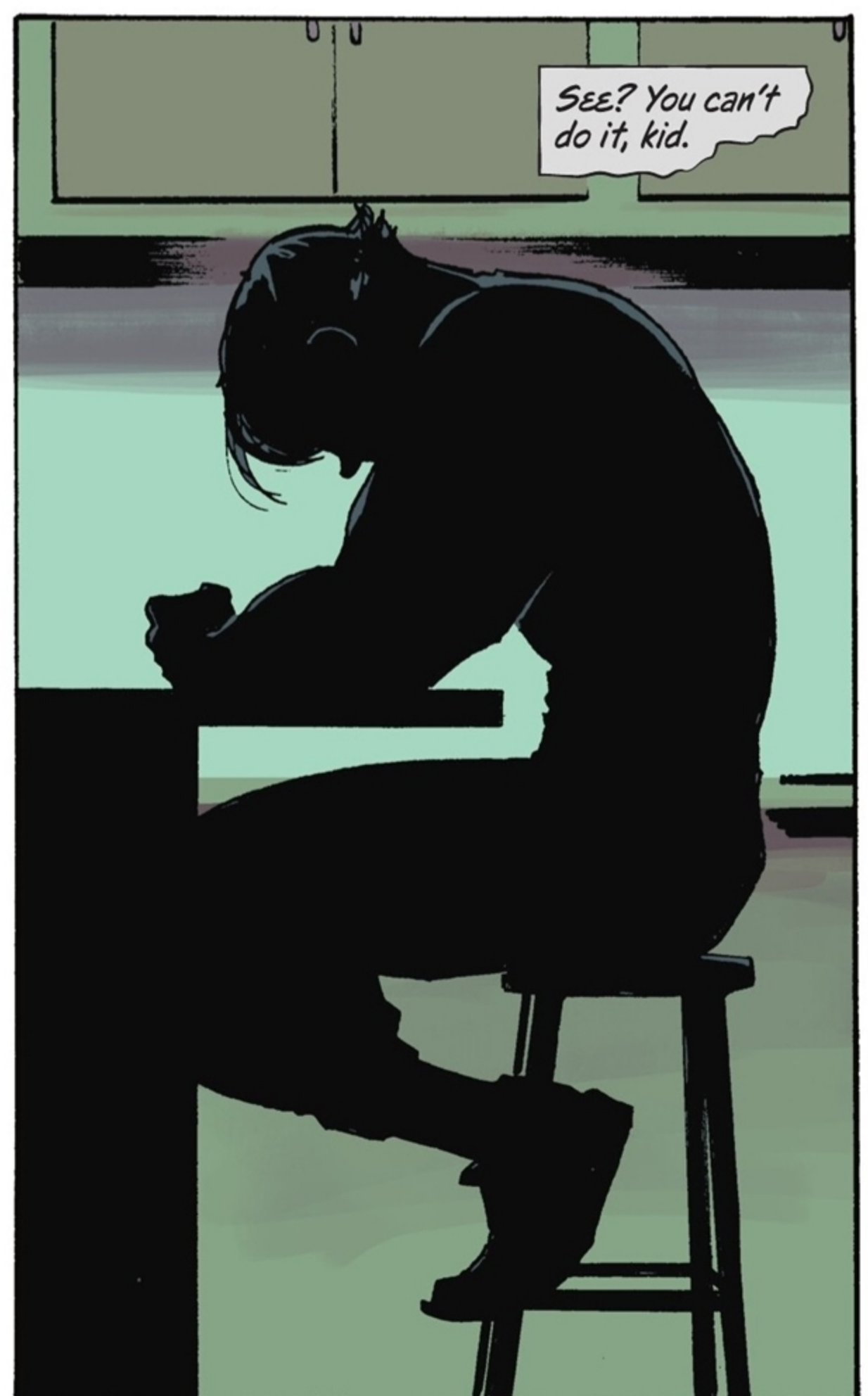
WE'RE **ALL** WATCHING THIS BORING-ASS MOVIE TOGETHER. BEGINNING TO END.

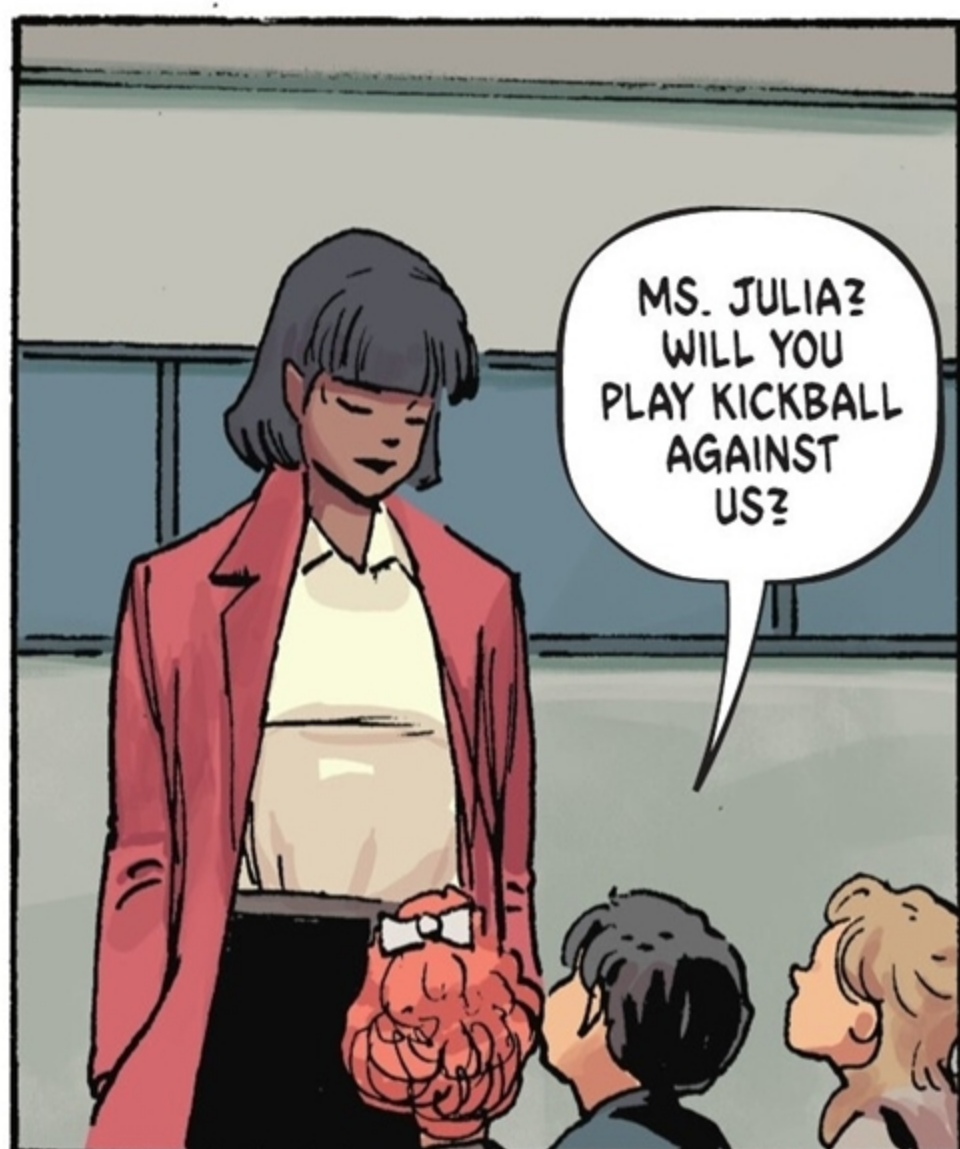


@#%\$, IT'S BLACK AND WHITE?











...And that's accept it.



Look around, past your fists, at all the people who'll get hurt. Look up past the towers, the satellites, at the forces at work. A whole sky tilted against you. And then look down past your feet, at how far you could fall...



--PARTY ANIMALS TERRORIZE IN BROAD--



...and do the only good thing you can.



--MAYOR GORDON, STILL HOSPITALIZED, TELLS PEOPLE TO RESIST FEAR--



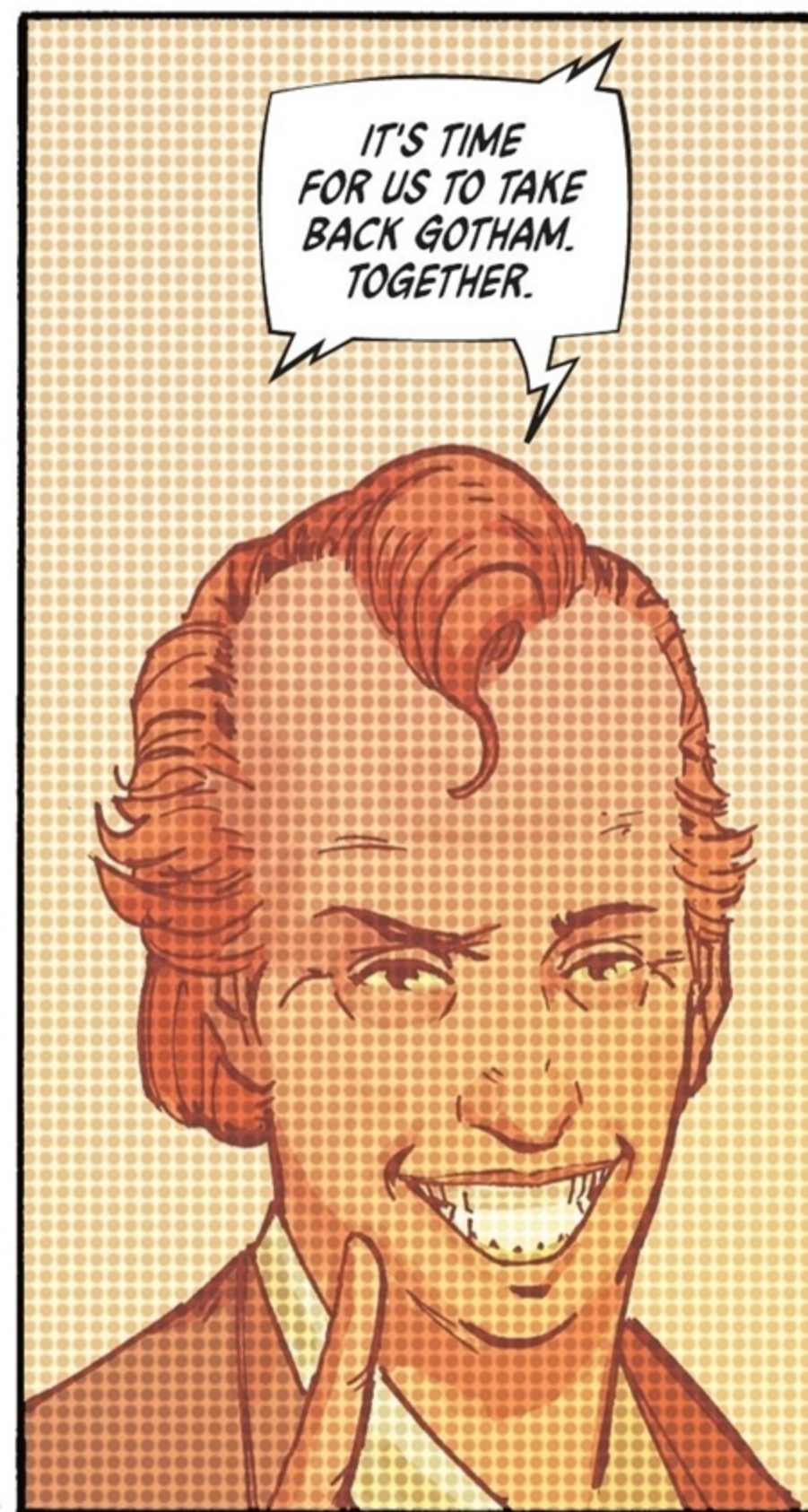
GORDON'S VISION HAS FAILED YOU.

FAILED THIS CITY.

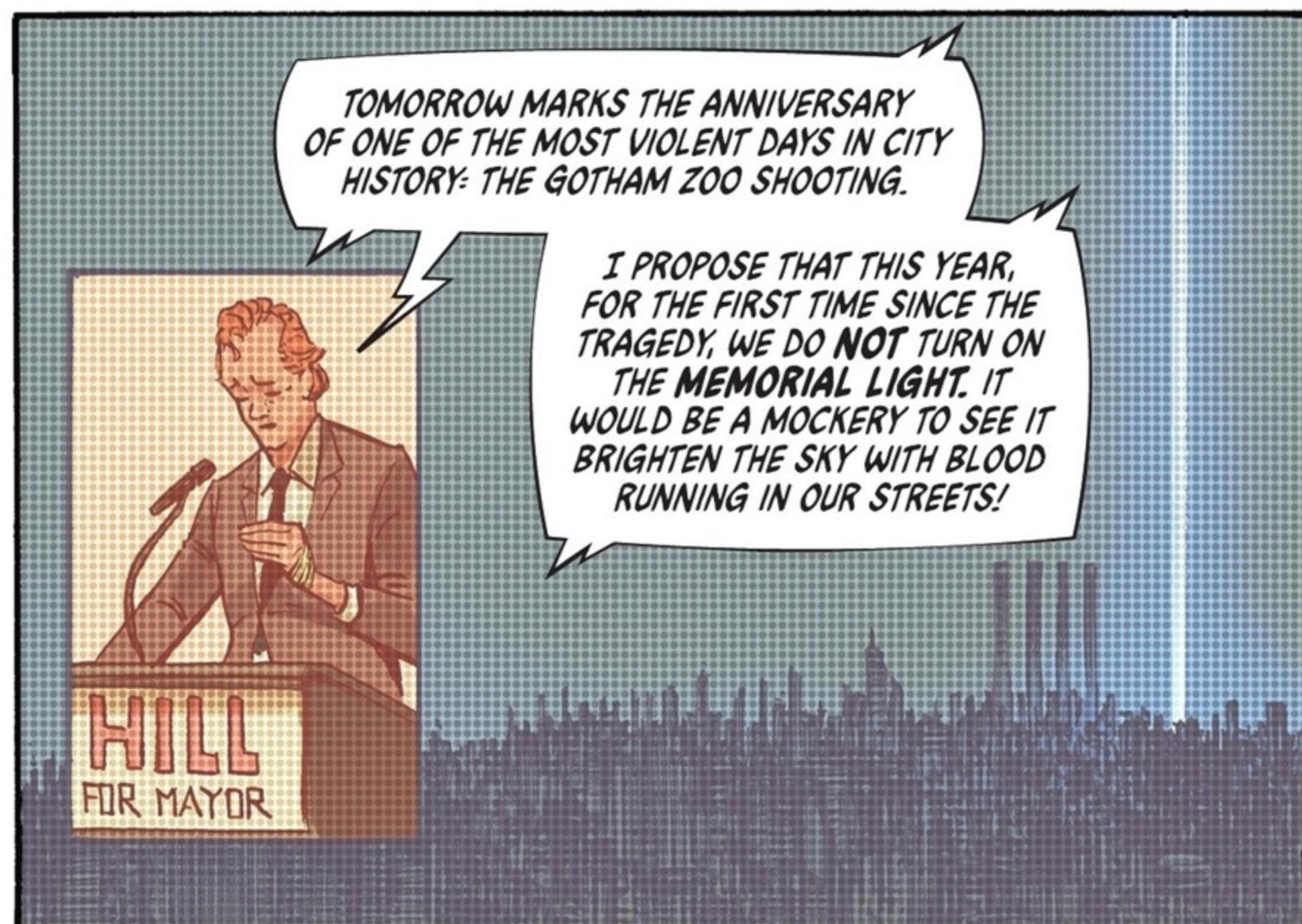


I'M PROUD TO HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF COMMISSIONER BULLOCK AND THE G.C.P.D.

CLAP CLAP CLAP



IT'S TIME FOR US TO TAKE BACK GOTHAM TOGETHER.



TOMORROW MARKS THE ANNIVERSARY OF ONE OF THE MOST VIOLENT DAYS IN CITY HISTORY: THE GOTHAM ZOO SHOOTING.

I PROPOSE THAT THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE TRAGEDY, WE DO **NOT** TURN ON THE MEMORIAL LIGHT. IT WOULD BE A MOCKERY TO SEE IT BRIGHTEN THE SKY WITH BLOOD RUNNING IN OUR STREETS!



AND AMIDST ALL THIS, PEOPLE ARE WONDERING: WHERE IS THE BATMAN?

HOW WILL HE RESPOND?



...THAT'S RIGHT. TWO HUNDRED MILLION TO STAND DOWN FOR ONE WEEK AND I'LL MAKE SURE WE GO A LITTLE BIT EASIER ON OLD GOTHAM.

NOW, I CAN'T SEE YOU, BUDDY, BUT I HOPE YOU'RE SMILING JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.



THINKING ABOUT ALL OF THE GOOD BATMAN COULD DO WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY.



THE CARS. THE WEAPONS. THE TECH.



HE'LL BE SOMETHING LARGER THAN LIFE. SOMETHING EPIC. BATMAN WILL--



ENOUGH.



I'LL TAKE THE DEAL.



TO BE CONTINUED...